

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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R 121210Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6857

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 9263

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, CB, TH, AU, ID, BM, IN, FR, LA

SUBJ: UPGRADING RESIDENT DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION FOR PHNOM PENH

1. A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS DOWNGRADED OR REMOVED THEIR REPRESENTATION FROM PHNOM PENH LAST JANUARY AND FEBRUARY DURING THE KC CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CAPITAL, CITING WORSENING SECURITY CONDITIONS HERE AS JUSTIFICATION. THIS HAS SUBSEQUENTLY TURNED OUT TO BE AT LEAST IN PART A PRETEXT, SINCE THE MILITARY SITUATION HAS IMPROVED MARKEDLY AND THE THREAT TO THE CITY HAS GREATLY DIMINISHED. PHNOM PENH'S DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION, HOWEVER, HAS NOT RETURNED TO ITS FORMER LEVEL.

2. IN OUR VIEW, THE RECENT FANK MILITARY PERFORMANCE, AS WELL AS THE INCREASING GKR SELF-CONFIDENCE, AS DISPLAYED IN ITS JULY 9 PEACE INITIATIVE, DEMONSTRATE CLEARLY THAT THE REASONS FOR THE JANUARY-FEBRUARY DIPLOMATIC DOWNGRADING ARE NO LONGER VALID. WE BELIEVE THIS POINT SHOULD BE MADE TO THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED, AND THEY SHOULD BE URGED, TO THE EXTENT APPROPRIATE AND FEASIBLE, TO RESTORE THEIR MISSIONS HERE TO THEIR FORMER LEVEL. THE RESULT OF THESE EFFORTS WOULD BE A MORE IMPRESSIVE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY HERE, WHOSE PRESENCE WOULD BOOST GKR MORALE AND ENCOURAGE THE KHMER TO PRESS THEIR CAUSE MORE EFFECTIVELY PRIOR TO AND DURING THE UNGA SESSION.

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3. WE SUBMIT FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION THE

FOLLOWING ROUNDUP OF COUNTRIES WHERE WE BELIEVE POSSIBILITY EXISTS FOR UPGRADING THEIR REPRESENTATION HERE AND THE CURRENT STATUS OF THAT REPRESENTATION.

INDONESIA - THE EMBASSY IS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A CHARGE, SINCE AMBASSADOR DHARSONO IS RESIDENT IN SAIGON AS HEAD OF THE INDONESIAN ICCS DELEGATION. THE CHARGE IS EFFECTIVE, BUT HE IS STILL A CHARGE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN FOREIGN MINISTER KEUKY LIM VISITED JAKARTA IN LATE MARCH, HE WAS TOLD THAT INDONESIA WOULD "SOON" APPOINT A RESIDENT AMBASSADOR TO PHNOM PENH. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER DEVELOPEMENTS ON THIS.

THAILAND - THE THAI AMBASSADOR LEFT PHNOM PENH ON MARCH 31. DESPITE THE FACT THAT HIS SUCCESSOR HAS BEEN SELECTED, THE RTG HAS NOT YET REQUESTED AGREEMENT, AND ACCORDING TO EMBASSY BANGKOK, MORE DELAY CAN BE ANTICIPATED. THE THAI HIATUS IS PARTICULARLY VISIBLE, AND IT IS UNCLEAR TO US WHY THE RTG IS HOLDING UP THE APPOINTMENT.

AUSTRALIA - THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR LEFT PHNOM PENH ON DECEMBER 13 FOR HOME LEAVE, THEN DELAYED HIS RETURN IN JANUARY, OSTENSIBLY BECAUSE OF THE SECURITY SITUATION. ON MARCH 12, PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM ANNOUNCED AMBASSADOR JOHNSTON'S REASSIGNMENT AND POINTED OUT THAT MOST EMBASSIES IN PHNOM PENH WERE ADMINISTERED BY CHARGES, THUS CLEARLY INDICATING AUSTRALIA'S INTENTION IN THIS REGARD. WHEN THE CURRENT CHARGE LEAVES ON TRANSFER NEXT MONTH HE IS TO BE REPLACED BY ANOTHER CHARGE SENT HERE FROM SAIGON.

NOTE - AS A MATTER OF FACT, THERE ARE SEVEN AMBASSADORS IN PHNOM PENH AT PRESENT -- THOSE REPRESENTING THE UNITED STATES, GREAT BRITAIN (THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR AND HIS WIFE RETURNED FROM LEAVE MAY 24), KOREA, JAPAN, PHILIPPINES, SOUTH VIETNAM AND ISRAEL. TWO MORE, FROM LAOS AND THAILAND, WILL PRESUMABLY BE ARRIVING AT SOME POINT.

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BURMA - THE BURMESE AMBASSADOR LEFT FEBRUARY 17 AND THE EMBASSY WAS CLOSED SHORTLY THEREAFTER, WITH THE BURMESE CITING SECURITY CONFITIONS AS THE REASON FOR THEIR DEPARTURE.

INDIA - THE INDIANS, ALSO CITING DECLINING SECURITY, FOLLOWED THE BURMESE LEAD IN EARLY MARCH. BY THAT

TIME, THEY WERE REPRESENTED HERE BY ONLY A THIRD SECRETARY.

LAOS - THE LAO AMBASSADOR LEFT JULY 5. HIS SUCCESSOR HAS BEEN NAMED AND RECEIVED AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, EMBASSY VIENTIANE REPORTING INDICATES THAT THE LPF ARE HOLDING UP THIS AND OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN POSTINGS AS PART OF THEIR CAMPAIGN TO GET PGNU RECOGNITION FOR THE PRG.

FRANCE - LOUIS DAUGE, WHO HAD BEEN AMBASSADOR TO CAMBODIA SINCE 1968 BUT RESIDENT IN PARIS SINCE 1971, WAS REASSIGNED IN SEPTEMBER 1973, TO WARSAW. THE FRENCH DID NOT SEEK AGREEMENT FOR A REPLACEMENT. THE THEN-CHARGE LEFT ON OCTOBER 30, 1973, AND WAS SUCCEEDED BY A DIPLOMAT OF LOWER RANK.

4. COMMENT: WE WILL BE TAKING UP THIS QUESTION WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SHORTLY AND WOULD APPRECIATE THE

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6858

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 9263

DEPARTMENT'S THOUGHTS ON WHAT THE U.S., IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE GKR, MIGHT USEFULLY DO TO ACHIEVE A HIGHER LEVEL OF DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IN THE KHMER REPUBLIC. OUR PRELIMINARY THINKING IS THAT:

(A) FAVORABLE RESPONSE ARE MOST LIKELY IN THE CASE OF INDONESIA, THAILAND AND AUSTRALIA. THAILAND HAS AN AMBASSADOR IN THE WORKS, AND IT IS A QUESTION OF SPEEDING UP THE PROCESS. INDONESIA AND AUSTRALIA, PARTICULARLY THE LATTER, ARE PROBABLY RELUCTANT TO COMMIT THEMSELVES FURTHER HERE. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED PROSPECTS IN PHNOM PENH COULD USEFULLY BE EMPHASIZED, WITH A VIEW TO ENCOURAGING CANBERRA AND JAKARTA TO RE-EXAMINE THEIR PRESENT REPRESENTATION POLICIES.

(B) THE LAOTIAN SITUATION IS, OF COURSE, A DELICATE ONE. NONETHELESS, THE QUESTION OF GETTING THE NEW LAO AMBASSADOR HERE SHOULD BE FOLLOWED CLOSELY SO THAT THE LAO DO NOT PUT IT IN LIMBO.

(C) WE CONSIDER IT UNLIKELY THAT THE BURMESE AND INDIANS WILL BE AMENABLE TO REOPENING THEIR EMBASSIES HERE. WE BELIEVE, NEVERTHELESS, THAT A REPRESENTATION CONFIDENTIAL

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TO THEM SHOULD BE MADE, IF ONLY TO BRING TO THEIR ATTENTION THE FACT THAT THE REASONS THEY ORIGINALLY CITED FOR CLOSING THEIR EMBASSIES ARE NO LONGER VALID.

(D) ALTHOUGH THE FRENCH ARE UNLIKELY TO SEND AN AMBASSADOR HERE, WE BELIEVE THAT FURTHER EFFORTS TO CONVINCE THEM TO UPGRADE THEIR REPRESENTATION HERE WOULD NOT BE OUT OF PLACE. THIS MIGHT BE PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE AT THE PRESENT TIME, GIVEN THE JULY 9 GKR STATEMENT ON UNCONDITIONAL NEGOTIATIONS AND THE FRENCH PREDILECTION FOR SUCH SOLUTIONS.
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